Deconstructing the BRICs: 
Structural Transformation and Aggregate Productivity Growth

Gaaitzen de Vries 
University of Groningen

Abdul Azeez Erumban 
University of Groningen

Marcel Timmer 
University of Groningen

Ilya Voskoboynikov 
University of Groningen

Harry Wu 
Hitotsubashi University

This paper studies structural transformation in the BRIC countries, Brazil, Russia, India, and China, for the period from 1980 to 2008. We bring together a unique sector data set of value added and employment (including self-employment) that allows a comparative analysis of growth in the BRIC countries at a detailed industry level. The dataset is based on a critical assessment of the reliability, consistency, as well as the concepts and definitions used in various primary data sources. The BRICs are distinct in production structures. A novel decomposition analysis suggests economic growth is related to different sectoral development patterns. Natural resource sectors account for a large share of growth in Brazil and Russia. Market services sectors account for two-thirds of growth in India, whereas half of China’s rapid productivity growth originates in the manufacturing sector.